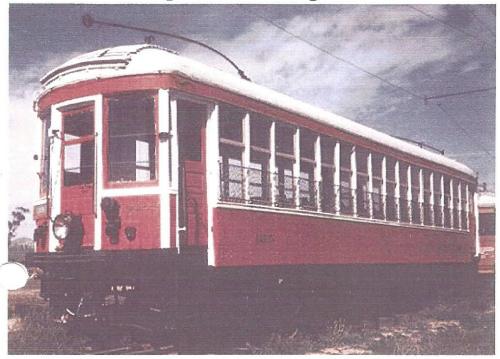
AGM caps first year of stops & starts



Former BCER interurban car 1225, which was bought by the Orange Empire Railway Museum over 40 years ago, is FVHRS' interurban car of choice to start the operations on the old Fraser Valley Line. Negotiations have been going on since December, 2001.

A Message from the FVHRS Chair

As the Society's first year draws to a close, I reflect back over the past twelve months. Since the formation of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society much has happened and some things have not happened the way in which we wanted.

The biggest success has been the development of a good relationship with the Cloverdale and District Chamber of Commerce and the Cloverdale Business Improvement Association along with the Surrey Museum and Archives to promote the development of a streetcar line on the Fairgrounds and through Cloverdale to interconnect with our proposed interurban system. We have located a replicated 1908 J.G. Brill single truck streetcar that will be leased from its owners in Victoria by the Museum.

Regrettably, negotiations to lease BCER 1220 from the Steveston Restoration Interurban Society have fallen through. An extensive business plan has been developed and is being prepared for distribution. The business plan identifies other cars that we can negotiate to own or lease. Negotiations are, in fact, underway with the Orange Empire Rail Museum in Perris, California, to acquire BCER 1225, an historic gem, as it was the last BCER interurban to carry fare-box passengers.

The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society has come a long way in a short time and directors are convinced that we will be able to stay on track despite a delay in our 'timetable'. We hope to see you at the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, March 27 at Fraser Downs in Cloverdale. (See back page for more information.)

Robert Ashton Chair, FVHRS "Our first year has had more stops and starts than we anticipated," says FVHRS Chair Robert Ashton, "We got derailed on Car 1220 in Richmond but we're hoping that Car 1225 will get us back on track."

Since the last newsletter, the FVHRS Board members have:

- Completed an extensive Business Plan that outlines the Society's plans for development of the entire project including projected revenues and expenditures for the first four years of operation;
- Entered into an agreement with Applied Business students at Kwantlen University College to undertake a detailed economic impact study of the interurban operation on the town of Cloverdale and for FVHRS' role in B.C.'s bid for the 2010 Olympics;
- Begun negotiations with Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, California to acquire BCER interurban car 1225;
- Terminated 'current' negotiations with the Steveston Interurban Restoration Society for leasing BCER interurban car 1220;
- Continued negotiations with the owner of Sea-Tac Interurban Car 523 - The Tulip Car, which is still available for a modest sum;
- Assisted in additional discussions between Cloverdale and District Chamber of Commerce and Cloverdale Business Improvement Association with the Greater Victoria Electric Railway Society and BC Transit Victoria regarding the loan of a Brill Streetcar for use in Cloverdale to interface with FVHRS operations and the Fairground.

"At our first annual general meeting, we will have a presentation on plans for Cloverdale," Ashton continued. "The Chamber and the BIA have a PowerPoint presentation on how they are seeking to make Cloverdale a 'destination'.

"In addition, there is a town centre plan that will see various improvements to the town core of Cloverdale and a complete upgrade of facilities on the fairgrounds that will feature a hotel, convention centre and casino.

"The proposed developments for Cloverdale could see millions of dollars being generated that would be pumped back into the community for a wide variety of services - including a streetcar line and the development of the interurban project," Ashton concluded.

Brownsville

Once a key town in Surrey's development; now a cornerstone in foreshore revitalization

As mentioned in the Fall 2001 edition of the FVHRS News, according to Jack Brown's history of "Early Settlement Centers in Surrey", Brownsville was a prominent community in the economic development of Surrey.

Located across the Fraser River from B.C.'s then largest community of New Westminster, Brownsville was developed by Ebenezer Brown, who built the first hotel there in 1861 along with a wharf. With the advent of a ferry system and the development of the New Westminster Southern Railway line connecting Brownsville to the United States via Cloverdale, the small community began to grow.

At its height during the 1891 to 1904 period, Brownsville had four hotels along the road leading to the ferry docks, a general store, stables, a salon and a post office.

But a ferry link was not sufficient now that rail linkage went from Vancouver to New Westminster, Brownsville to Cloverdale and Cloverdale to Port Guichon (Ladner) to connect with the ferry system to Victoria.

The provincial government built a steel railway bridge across the Fraser River in 1904 from New Westminster to what is now the northern part of Bridgeview...and the demise of Brownsville was a foregone conclusion.

The Fraser River Bridge even caught the attention of the British Columbia Electric Railway Company.

Plans were developed for a Fraser Valley line and sod-turning ceremonies took place on July 26, 1907.

Service by the New Westminster Southern to Cloverdale and points south was abandoned in 1909 (officially in 1918), the same year that Great Northern opened its sea level line to Olivers and Blaine, via the edge of the Delta Bog Flags, Mud Bay, Crescent Beach and White Rock.

The Great Northern (now Burlington Northern - Santa Fe) went right past Brownsville without a stop.

Brownsville would become nothing more than decaying pilings and docks - remnants of a once striving community.

Millennium turns the clock

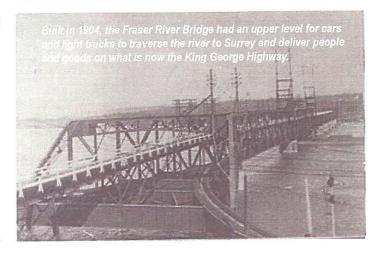
Another century would turn before Brownsville would see redevelopment.

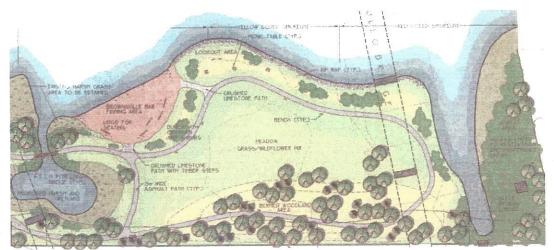
Surrey's Millennium Task Force initiated a program to improve the Fraser River waterfront and its access by constructing the Fraser River Boardwalk Park at the north foot of Tannery Road - a half-mile to the west of Brownsville

Plans included the development of Brownsville Bar Park with a pedestrian/cyclist system connecting the two

On Saturday, June, 2, Brownsville Bar Park was officially opened adding a new venue to Surrey's tourism attractions...and one to play a big role in FVHRS's interurban plans.

(Extracted from "The Historical Geography of South Surrey, British Columbia", Jack Brown's Masters Thesis at Western Washington U. and Information provided by the City of Surrey.)





Brownsville Bar Park as envisaged by Surrey planners was opened in June, 2001 and has become a popular recreation area for many residents. The park is located at the end of Old Yale Road under the SkyTrain Bridge and just west of the Pattullo and Fraser River Bridges. The Society plans to terminate its run near the park to increase access for Surrey residents to the city's scenic riverfront where they can also learn about its past at the same time.

Bylaw change - vote on split terms for Directors

At the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society's first annual general meeting (to be held in the Jim Kealing Room at Fraser Downs on Wednesday, March 27, starting with registration at 6:30 pm), the membership will be asked to vote on a change to the Society's bylaws.

The resolution will seek the election of six directors for a twoyear term and five directors for a one-year term, starting with the election of the Board of Directors for the 2002-2003 term.

An announcement of which directors seeking either term will be made prior to the election of directors, if the resolution is passed by the membership.

A notice of the AGM, an agenda and other information is enclosed with this newsletter.

SEE YOU AT THE AGM!



The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society NEWS is published quarterly by the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society for its membership, sponsors and limited public distribution.

The Editorial Board welcomes brief letters and stories from readers who remember the Fraser Valley Line when BCER's interurban trains plied the rails between New Westminster and Chilliwack.

Please send your contributions to: Graham MacDonell, Editor, Heritage Railway NEWS, 148 - 3160 Townline Road, Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 5P4 or e-mail: gemcom@home.com

The Editorial Board also welcomes advertising for business card size ads at \$20 per placement per issue.

For additional information about FVHRS, contact: Allen Aubert, Secretary, FVHRS 1045 - 165th Street, Surrey, BC V4A 9A2